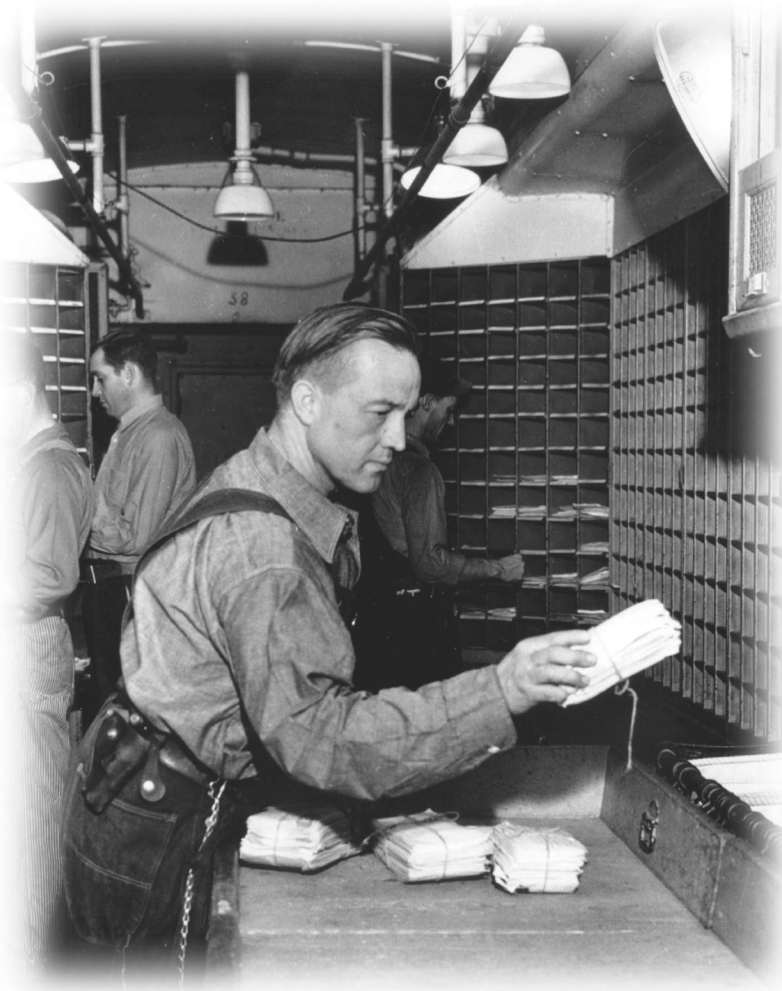
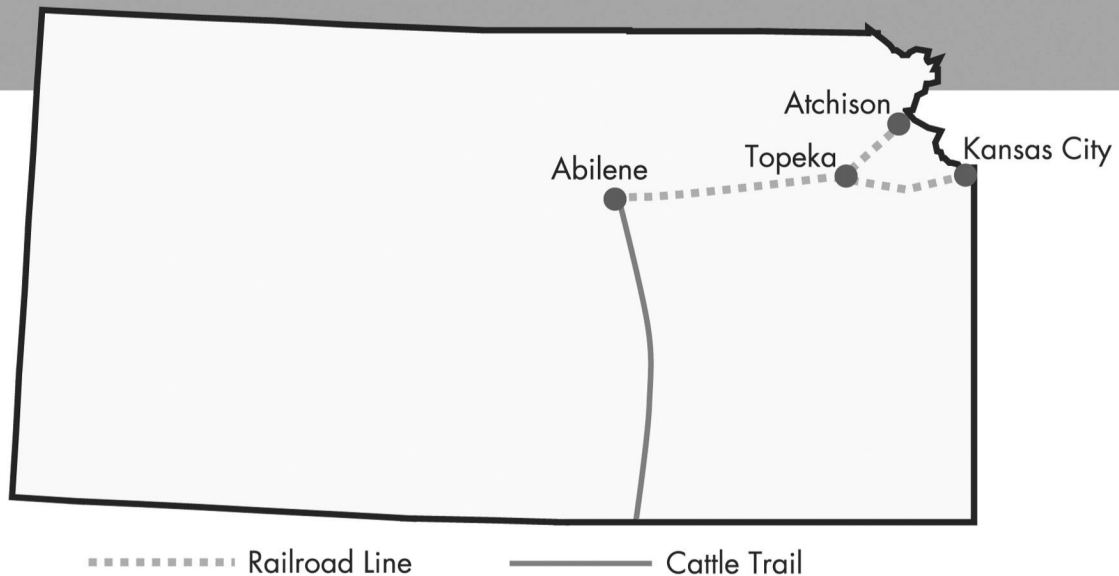


## Riding the Rails

Trains played a very important part in Kansas history. Specifically, the railroads brought many people to settle in Kansas. The United States government gave land to the railroad companies. Railroads could be built on this land. The land that was not needed to build railroads could be sold. The railroad companies lowered the price on this land to attract settlers. In many cases, railroad land was cheaper than non-railroad land. Settlers liked the idea of a bargain and they became customers of the railroad.

In addition, farmers needed railroads. Farmers grew wheat and corn. They needed railroads to get their crops to market. For instance, when farmers harvested their crops they could take them to the railroad depot. There the grain was loaded into train cars. It was shipped to buyers around the country.





The cattle industry grew because of the railroads. Joseph G. McCoy, in particular, saw a way to get cattle from Texas to the East. In 1867 Abilene was a new town. The Kansas Pacific Railroad had been built as far as Abilene. McCoy persuaded some Texas ranchers to send their cattle to Kansas. Cowboys brought the cattle from Texas to Kansas. The railroad took the cattle to markets in the East. This made a lot of money for the railroads.

In addition to hauling cattle, the trains carried mail. In the 1860s the railroads became a "post office on wheels." Each train had a special mail car. The U.S. mail was sorted in this car. Then it was taken to local post offices. For example, in 1930 there were more than 10,000 trains with mail cars. From these trains the mail was delivered to every city, town, and village in the United States.